

of Suessa, and Peter delle Vigne, the latter a Capuan of humble birth and a poor student of Bologna whose rise to high office and sudden fall form a story like that of Wolsey.

The Law-book of Frederick, the "Constitutions of the Realm of Sicily," was the work of this constitutional lawyer; published at Melfi in 1231 it proclaimed, as the Assises of Ariano proclaimed, the principles by which the King intended to govern. The Constitutions are the declaration of an Abolutism unknown to the West since the days of the Roman Empire—Cassar is to be the one source and guardian of law, all statutes and customs adverse to the new Constitutions are to be quashed—the laws and edicts of the Norman kings the predecessors of Frederick are revived in full force and crowned with an Absolutism greater even than theirs,

In a long reign which showed no intermission of energy unto its close Frederick II. and his ministers followed the path indicated for them by the genius of the Hautevilles in the destruction of local privilege, in the construction of an all-dominating absolutism before which all should be equal and equally subject, in a policy of eclecticism, which, choosing the best of the

racial and
social elements of the kingdom, should
combine
them into a system enlightened,
powerful, and tol-
erant, Frederick's success was
completer than
Roger the Second's as his means and
his opportun-
ities were greater. The nobles were
the ancient